CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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AUSTRALIA

Statements made by Mr. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs on 28, 29 and 30 May 1998 regarding Pakistan's nuclear tests

28 MAY 1998

I STRONGLY CONDEMN THE NUCLEAR TESTS CONDUCTED BY PAKISTAN TODAY. I WILL BE ANNOUNCING TOMORROW THE MEASURES AUSTRALIA WILL TAKE IN RESPONSE TO PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR TESTS.

AS WITH THE TESTS CONDUCTED BY INDIA, PAKISTAN'S ACTIONS HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SECURITY AND FLY IN THE FACE OF THE INTERNATIONAL NORM AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING.

PAKISTAN'S DECISION TO TEST HAS BEEN MADE IN SPITE OF THE STRONG INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF INDIA'S TESTS AND DIRECT PLEAS TO PAKISTAN BY AUSTRALIA AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND NOT TO EMULATE INDIA'S REGRETTABLE EXAMPLE.

A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE IN SOUTH ASIA WILL EXACERBATE RATHER THAN SOLVE REGIONAL SECURITY TENSIONS. PAKISTAN AND INDIA SHOULD BOTH SIGN THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY IMMEDIATELY, AND SHOULD THROW THEIR WEIGHT BEHIND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A FISSILE MATERIAL CUT-OFF TREATY.

I WILL CONTACT THE PAKISTANI HIGH COMMISSIONER TOMORROW TO CONVEY TO HIM AUSTRALIA'S DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT AND REGRET AND TO URGE HIS GOVERNMENT TO DESIST FROM ANY FURTHER TESTING. THE SAME MESSAGE WILL BE REGISTERED BY OUR HIGH COMMISSION IN ISLAMABAD.

PAKISTAN'S ACTIONS WILL IN NO WAY WEAKEN AUSTRALIA'S DETERMINATION, SHARED BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF GOVERNMENTS AND PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, TO SEE AN END TO THE ERA OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. WE WILL CONTINUE VIGOROUSLY TO PURSUE THIS OBJECTIVE, AND TO URGE PAKISTAN AND INDIA TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME.

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29 MAY 1998

FOLLOWING PAKISTAN'S ILL-ADVISED DECISION TO CONDUCT NUCLEAR TESTS OVERNIGHT, I AM TODAY ANNOUNCING A SERIES OF MEASURES THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WILL APPLY AGAINST PAKISTAN.

THE FOLLOWING MEASURES - SIMILAR TO THOSE IMPOSED ON INDIA - WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY:

- RECALL FOR CONSULTATIONS OF OUR HIGH COMMISSIONER FROM ISLAMABAD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE;

- SUSPENSION OF BILATERAL DEFENCE RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, INCLUDING THE RECALL OF AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE ADVISER STATIONED IN ISLAMABAD AND THE CANCELLATION OF OFFICER EXCHANGES AND OTHER DEFENCE-RELATED VISITS. AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL CURRENTLY TRAINING IN PAKISTAN WILL BE WITHDRAWN. AUSTRALIA WILL CANCEL ALL PLANNED VISITS TO AUSTRALIA BY PAKISTANI DEFENCE PERSONNEL;

- EXCLUSION OF NON-HUMANITARIAN AID. CONSISTENT WITH MY DECISION TO PRESERVE THE HUMANITARIAN COMPONENT OF THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO INDIA, THE PROGRAM TO PAKISTAN WILL CONTINUE. HOWEVER, I HAVE CANCELLED MY DECISION TO DOUBLE AID TO PAKISTAN NEXT YEAR. THIS WAS CONTINGENT UPON PAKISTAN REFRAINING FROM TESTING;

- SUSPENSION OF MINISTERIAL AND SENIOR OFFICIAL VISITS;

- WITH MY SUPPORT, THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT HAVE DECIDED IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO CONTINUE WITH THE VISIT OF THE PAKISTAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION WHICH IS CURRENTLY IN AUSTRALIA. THAT VIEW HAS BEEN CONVEYED TO THE DELEGATION;

- IN ADDITION TO THESE BILATERAL STEPS, AUSTRALIA HAS TAKEN SEVERAL IMMEDIATE STEPS TO RESPOND IN MULTILATERAL FORA TO PAKISTAN'S TESTS, NAMELY (1) CALLING FOR AN EARLY "SPECIAL" SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER; (2) TAKING A LEAD IN HAVING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CTBTO PREPARATORY COMMISSION ISSUE A STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE TESTS ON BEHALF OF PREPCOM MEMBERS; AND (3) SEEKING A SPECIAL ITEM ON NUCLEAR TESTING AT THE JUNE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING OF THE IAEA.

I SPOKE THIS MORNING WITH THE PAKISTAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO CONVEY TO HIM AUSTRALIA'S STRONG CONDEMNATION OF HIS COUNTRY'S ACTION. PAKISTAN'S ACTION IS A FLAGRANT DEFIANCE OF INTERNATIONAL NON-PROLIFERATION NORMS AND HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SECURITY. IT IS SAD AND DEEPLY DISAPPOINTING THAT PAKISTAN HAS TURNED ITS BACK ON THE DIRECT PLEAS OF AUSTRALIA AND OTHERS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT. INSTEAD PAKISTAN HAS DECIDED TO JOIN INDIA IN ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

I CALL AGAIN ON BOTH PAKISTAN AND INDIA IMMEDIATELY TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY WITHOUT CONDITION, AND ACCEDE TO THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY.

THE SAME MESSAGE WILL BE REGISTERED BY OUR HIGH COMMISSION IN ISLAMABAD.

I REITERATE THAT IT IS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTING THAT, IN THE FACE OF OUR DIRECT REPRESENTATIONS, PAKISTAN HAS CHOSEN A COURSE OF ACTION WHICH CASTS SUCH A MAJOR SHADOW ON WHAT HAD OTHERWISE BEEN A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP.

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30 MAY 1998

I STRONGLY CONDEMN THE CONDUCT OF FURTHER NUCLEAR TESTS BY PAKISTAN. I AM PROFOUNDLY DISAPPOINTED THAT PAKISTAN HAS SEEN FIT TO ADD TO THE FOLLY OF ITS TESTS ON 28 MAY. IT IS DEEPLY REGRETTABLE THAT THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN ABSOLUTE DISREGARD FOR THE MANY, DIRECT APPEALS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT, AND HAS WILFULLY TURNED ITS BACK ON THE SINCERE EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ENCOURAGE REASON TO PREVAIL. THIS ACTION DEFIES THE HOPES OF PEOPLE EVERYWHERE FOR A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR TESTING.

I ANNOUNCED ON 29 MAY THE MEASURES AUSTRALIA HAS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO THE FIRST SET OF PAKISTANI NUCLEAR TESTS. THE SECOND SET ONLY STRENGTHENS THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION THAT ANY NUCLEAR TESTING COUNTRY SHOULD BEAR THE FULL WEIGHT OF THE INTENSE INTERNATIONAL OPPROBRIUM SUCH ACTS DESERVE.

A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE IN SOUTH ASIA WOULD NOT SIMPLY THREATEN THE SECURITY OF THE IMMEDIATE REGION. IT WOULD ALSO HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. AUSTRALIA STRONGLY URGES PAKISTAN AND INDIA TO CEASE THEIR DANGEROUS ACTS OF BRINKMANSHIP.

I CALL ON BOTH COUNTRIES TO RENOUNCE NUCLEAR TESTING AND IMMEDIATELY SIGN AND RATIFY THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY, TO JOIN IMMEDIATELY THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME, AND TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATION OF A "CUT-OFF" TREATY BANNING THE PRODUCTION OF FISSILE MATERIAL FOR EXPLOSIVE PURPOSES.

THE AUSTRALIAN GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ORGANISATION DETECTED AN UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR EXPLOSION THAT TOOK PLACE AT 16:55 (AUSTRALIAN EASTERN STANDARD TIME) ON 30 MAY IN SOUTHWESTERN PAKISTAN. PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT THE YIELD OF THE EXPLOSION WAS LESS THAN 10 KILOTONNES OF TNT.